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## AMERICAN ART NEWS.

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Powell's Art Gallery, 983 Sixth Ave.  
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A. Kassof, 3 Greenwich Ave.  
Charles Zito, 179 Columbus Ave.

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## BUREAU OF EXPERTIZING.

Advice as to the placing at public or private sale of art work of all kinds, pictures, sculptures, furniture, bibelots, etc., will be given at the office of the AMERICAN ART NEWS, and also counsel as to the value of art works and the obtaining of the best "expert" opinion on the same. For these services a nominal fee will be charged. Persons having art works and desirous of disposing or obtaining an idea of their value will find our service on these lines a saving of time, and, in many instances of unnecessary expense. It is guaranteed that any opinion given will be so given without regard to personal or commercial motives.

## BUREAU OF APPRAISAL.

We are so frequently called upon to pass upon the value of art works for collectors and estates, for the purpose of insurance, sale, or more especially to determine whether prior appraisals made to fix the amount due under the inheritance or death taxes are just and correct ones—and so often find that such former appraisals have been made by persons not qualified by experience or knowledge of art quality or market values, with resultant deception and often overpayments of taxes, etc.—that we suggest to all collectors and executors the advisability of consulting our Bureau of Appraisal either in the first place or for revision of other appraisals. This Bureau is conducted by persons in every way qualified by experience and study of art works for many years, and especially of market values, both here and abroad; our appraisals are made without regard to anything but quality and values, and our charges are moderate—our chief desire being to save our patrons and the public from ignorant, needless and costly appraisal expenditure.

## ART SALE RECORDS.

Collectors, dealers and other interested are reminded that the first two numbers of Sales of the Year for 1915, in pamphlet form, are still on sale at the AMERICAN ART NEWS office, 15 East 40 St., at 25 cents each, postage prepaid. No. 1, the Brayton Ives Collection of Prints, and No. 2, the Blakeslee and Duveen Pictures Sales. The first of the series for 1916, No. 3, The Reisinger and Andrews-Canfield Picture Sales, will soon appear.

## MORGAN ENRICHES MUSEUM.

The gift to the Metropolitan Museum by Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, this week, of the Colonna, or, as it is now better known, the Morgan Raphael, and the remaining portion of the Hoentschel collection of Gothic and Renaissance art—the other portions having already been donated to the institution by his late father—is a gracious and generous act.

While it was undoubtedly the wish of the late J. Pierpont Morgan that his art treasures, or at least all but a small portion which had sentimental associations—should be given the Museum, his son was left by the former's will with full discretionary power as to the disposition of the Morgan collections and through the sale of the Oriental porcelains, and the Fragonard panels the art public had gained the impression that the City and the Museum would not receive perhaps any part even of the collections.

Mr. Morgan's decision to carry out his father's evident wish, as expressed in his will, for the passing of his treasures to the Museum will remove this public impression, as regards not only his disposition of the Morgan art, but his attitude towards the Museum, for it had been more than hinted, and most unjustly, that he was hostile, on account of real or imagined grievances, towards the Museum, and its present officials. The gift will also raise the hope that it will be followed by another of the remaining Morgan pictures and the miniatures, at least.

The occurrence also would seem to strengthen the idea, long prevalent in art circles, that the reason for the sale of the porcelains, and perhaps of the Fragonard panels, was due to the fact that there was a substantial balance of payment still to be made on them, under the long credits which the late Mr. Morgan enjoyed, and which he, sometimes, in his art collecting took advantage of, most legitimately and wisely, to have time for thorough study and "expertizing" of these purchases—to the dealers from whom they came, and to whom the porcelains, at least, returned. It was only natural, if this idea is well founded, that the present Mr. Morgan preferred, especially in the dark days following the war's outbreak, to get for the estate the return of monies already paid, with probably a good profit, and to obviate the payment of a large balance.

## DID BUNCE PAINT IT?

Hartford, Conn., Feb. 3, 1916.

An interesting picture, offered and sold at the Anderson Galleries recently as an example of Gedney Bunce's Venetian painting, is the innocent cause of a remarkable lapse of memory on the part of the artist. This canvas, an upright composition of moderate size distinguished from other Bunces by virtue of a blue (rather than a yellow or red or green) general tone, which sold at auction for the astonishing low price of \$30 as quoted in the ART NEWS has been sent here where the artist occupies a studio in the winter season, for the painter's identification.

Bunce, on seeing the picture, declared that he did not remember whether he painted it or not. Curtiss H. Moyer, Bunce's local dealer, who has disposed of about a dozen of his pictures during the last year at good prices, furtively smiled when asked for his opinion as to the genuineness of the picture in question and diplomatically quotes Bunce.

Friends of the artist say that he signs his pictures variously, and that his memory, of late years, has been so faulty that he is often convinced, with difficulty, that some of the most important and best authenticated pictures painted by him 30 or 40 years ago are really his own work.

The picture in question, however, is believed to have been painted more recently. It is on canvas while Bunce usually, although not always, paints pictures of its size on mahogany panels. Although Bunce is an easy man to imitate it is not believed that there have been any spurious Bunces in the market.

## CORRESPONDENCE

## Dealers as Art Appraisers.

Editor AMERICAN ART NEWS.

Dear Sir,

Permit me to congratulate you upon your frank and courageous exposé and criticism of what seems to me, and many of my fellows, nothing less than an abuse—namely the custom of calling in professional, or indeed other art dealers (for there are gentry who pose as private collectors who are in reality dealers) by the N. Y. Custom House appraisers' office, to pass upon the validity or value of art works imported by their fellows.

Such a custom would not be tolerated by any other Government in the world—much less originated by Government officials. It cannot fail, as it has several times in the past few years, to work the greatest injury to reputable dealers. Through the gaining of knowledge of the sources of supply of their competitors by the dealers called by the Custom House, these competitors have not only had these sources stopped up, through large commissions offered for exclusive service. Injury has also been caused other dealers by the "Knocking" of art works to their customers, by rivals who had opportunity to see and study them in the Custom House before delivery, through the latter having been called as witnesses in disputed duty cases.

It is passing strange that the heads of leading American art houses should not object to the calling of witnesses in these custom house cases, of their employees, but I am informed that at least one large N. Y. art house apparently favors such calling of its employees to pass upon the importations of other houses. Can this be possible? Surely if opposition were made by the employers of restorers, salesmen, or others in their employ to such service, the Government officials would recognize the justice of the request and refrain from calling such employees.

No, Mr. Editor, the custom which you so well and bravely criticize and protest against is all wrong—and should be stopped at once even if the Secretary of the Treasury has to be appealed to.

Yours very truly,  
Veteran Art Dealer.

New York, Feb. 2, 1916.

Will Finger Prints Stop Picture "Faking"?  
Editor AMERICAN ART NEWS.

Dear Sir:

Will finger prints stop "fakes"? It is timely and interesting to note that some publicity is being given to the subject of insuring, such as the "finger print" method referred to in an article in one of your recent issues.

All would welcome a means of positive identification. In the writer's opinion, the "finger print" can be duplicated just as readily as the signature and date and, perhaps, with greater ease and accuracy. To illustrate, it may be accomplished in at least two ways: (a) Manual skill, by "picchiattamenti" (imitating with small instruments and brush), and (b) Mechanical, by use of a dye or plate, with which an accurate impression, giving the same effect of the finger, can be made either upon the gold leaf seal or canvas itself.

Some system of identification should be adopted, not alone for the preservation of records but also to act as a check to "faking." Although the "finger print" may, to a limited extent, be a step in this direction, it seems to me that the intentional imitator, a clever and skilled artisan, can, with impunity, continue his practices, just so soon as he has "mastered" the "finger print."

The case is not analogous to that of the identification of the criminal in modern times, because, although the criminal is often brought to justice by the tell-tale print he left behind, we know that he did not do so for that express purpose; and, further, after he is apprehended, the law throws an additional safeguard about him, for fear of mistake, in that it requires, before there can be a conviction, that he be proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, before a court and jury.

At present it is mainly by the intimate study and knowledge of the individual characteristics of the painter's method, style, brushwork, etc., by which we identify and classify the work, almost regardless of the fact whether or not there is imprinted, brushed, signed or endorsed thereon the name, date, finger print, number or code mark, for the purported identification and genuineness.

May it not be a good idea for artists to sign and serially number their pictures, or use an individual code mark? Those who do not approve the signature and number method could use an individual code system, a copy of which could be deposited with a recognized museum, organization or other duly constituted governmental body or

board, authorized to receive and preserve such record. In the contingency that the artist should inadvertently duplicate the number or code mark, or omit the same, there is little likelihood that the composition would be the same. In any event, should the question of genuineness arise in any similar or different situation, it would facilitate the decision of the competent.

Very truly yours,

N. Y., Jan. 31, 1916. Stephen Pichetto.

## Those "Library Lions."

Editor American Art News.

Dear Sir:

I note with keen regret, in your issue of Jan. 22, a letter from a correspondent making light of the lions in front of the Public Library. The letter is of little consequence in itself, and I have no intention of defending the sculptures in question, which are of so high an order to need no defense from me, but I cannot refrain from expressing surprise, and even indignation, that you should give such a letter a place in your periodical, whose aims are so admirable.

The statues which are treated so flip-pantly are the serious product of a sculptor who, as you know, has produced and is producing works of exceptional merit, and who has the high respect of his fellow artists. I think you, too, should accord him the respect which his talents and his sincerity have won for him in the art world, and that you should guard him and all other serious artists from ridicule, so far as you can. Thoughtful criticism is proper and desirable, but no good purpose is served by such an article as the one to which I refer, and it is not only useless and silly, but cruel and unjust.

Yours faithfully,

Daniel C. French.

New York, Jan. 31, 1916.

[While we regret that Mr. Pell's humorous little fling at the Library Lions should have so annoyed Mr. French, we are confident Mr. Pell intended no reflection nor did we intend, ourselves, to make any such reflection on Mr. Potter's ability as a sculptor.—Ed.]

## OBITUARY.

Ruger Donoho.

A landscape painter of much talent, Ruger Donoho, who had exhibited with notable success both abroad and in this country, died suddenly Jan. 29 at his home, 130 W. 57 St., at the age of 58. Born at Church Hill, Mississippi, Mr. Donoho first became a pupil of R. Swain Gifford. He also studied at the Art Students League and in the early 80's went to Paris and entered the Julien Atelier, among his masters being Tony Robert Fleury, Bouguereau, Lefebvre and Boulangier. It was with a landscape painted at Grez and called "La Marcellerie," that the artist made his first success. This was exhibited at the Salon and now forms part of the permanent collection of the Brooklyn Museum. Mr. Donoho won a silver medal at the Paris Universal Exposition in 1889. In 1892 he won the Webb prize at the exhibition of the Society of American Artists and the following year a medal at the Columbia Exhibition in Chicago. He also won a silver medal at the Panama-Pacific Exposition. At the Carnegie Institute displays at Pittsburgh he was often represented and won an honorable mention there in 1911. Mr. Donoho, who leaves a widow, Miss Matilda Ackley of Philadelphia, was a member of the Lotos and Players Clubs.

Mrs. E. M. Gardner.

Just as she finished her thousandth painting of cats, Mrs. E. M. Gardner was stricken with blindness in her home in Pitman, N. J., and died there. Her sight held out just long enough for her to realize the ambition of her life.

Mrs. Gardner was born in Colchester, Conn. She began painting thirty years ago in Phila. and painted only cats.

## DEALERS' NOTES.

The superior collection of Engraved Portraits by the master engravers of the XVII Century, formed by Mr. Junius S. Morgan, and which was purchased from that collector by a German art dealer of this city last year, will be sold at auction at the American Art Galleries Friday evening, Feb. 18 next.

Dr. Paul Mersch arrived from Paris, via Bordeaux, on "L'Espagne" recently, and is at the Savoy Hotel. He will be at the Brandus Galleries in the Windsor Arcade for the present. Mr. Brandus has returned from Boston.

Mr. Charles S. Carstairs of Knoedler & Co., 556 Fifth Ave., has recently returned from a trip to Palm Beach, where he was the guest of Mr. Henry C. Frick.